

Remarks in Macon, Georgia October 25, 1996

The President. Thank you. Hello, Macon!

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you so much. Thank you. Mr. Mayor, thank you for a beautiful day in a beautiful city. I'm delighted to be here. Thank you for the Macon Whoopee hockey jersey. [Laughter] You know, tomorrow is Hillary's birthday; maybe I ought to give that to her. [Laughter] If that gets on the news before I get home tonight, I'm in deep trouble. [Laughter]

I want to thank all of our musicians here, the Central High School Marching Charger Band, the Northeast High School Raider Band. I thank the Community Church of God choir, the New Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church choir, the Swift Creek Church choir. Thank you all.

I thank the mayor again for welcoming me here. I thank Mayor Floyd Adams, who has come all the way from Savannah to be with us, one of the most beautiful cities in America. Thank you. I thank the legislators and the others who are here. I thank Rosemary Kaszans, who's running for Congress in Georgia, and wish her well.

I want to say a special word of thanks to the person who seeks to be your Congressman here, Jim Wiggins. Jim Wiggins is really what a Member of Congress from this district ought to be, a distinguished American veteran, a distinguished prosecuting attorney who did an excellent job as the United States Attorney here. I frankly hated to lose him in that position. But I was proud of him for coming back home and wanting to run for Congress to try to give this district to the people of Georgia and to its future. Thank you, Jim Wiggins, for your—[inaudible].

Thank you, Richard Gallo and the International Brotherhood of Police Officers, for your support. One of the most moving things to me in this election has been to have every major law enforcement organization in the country endorse 4 more years for Bill Clinton and Al Gore. We're making the streets of this country safer. If you give us 4 more years, we'll do a better

job and people will feel safe in their streets, in their neighborhoods, and in their schools.

I want to say a special word of thanks, too, to Congressman Sanford Bishop. What a fine, fine Member of Congress he has been. He will be an even greater Member of Congress when you give a young man like him some more terms, some more experience, and greater capacity to help this State, his district, and the people. So if any of you here live in his new district, give him a boost, he's earned it. You need to help him. Thank you, Sanford Bishop.

There are some people here, too—I know that Hershel Gober, the Deputy Director of the department of veterans administration, and Mary Lou Kenner are up here on the stage—there are veterans for Clinton/Gore taking caravans all through Georgia. Thank you very much. There they are over there. Thank you; I treasure your support.

I want to say now a special word about my friend Governor Zell Miller. Zell Miller spoke at the '92 convention about growing up in a house his mother built herself with her own hands. It was about the most moving talk I ever heard at one of those political conventions, maybe because it was so personal, so human, and because the political positions that Zell Miller holds flow out of the experience of his life. He's been a teacher, a United States marine, and a brilliant, brilliant Governor of Georgia. He wrote the new platform that the Democrats are running on.

And I got so tickled when our friends met in San Diego and their nominee, my opponent, said—they said, "Well, what about this platform. Do you agree with the things in this platform?" And he said, "Oh, I haven't read it." They were running from their platform, just like they're running from what they did in 1995 and early '96. Well, I want to tell you something, folks. I'm not running from the platform Zell Miller wrote. I'm running on it, and I'm proud of the new Democratic Party that he's helped to chart.

I was honored to take Zell Miller to Princeton University with me when I proposed an American version of Georgia's HOPE scholarships to make 2 years of college as universal in America

as a high school diploma is today, and I thank you, Zell Miller, for that as well.

And I want to thank Senator Sam Nunn for his early support, for the ideas he has contributed to our administration, for the work that he's done to make sure our military remains the strongest in the world, and the many, many contributions he has made to making Georgia and America a better place. There are some AmeriCorps folks out here; Sam Nunn was out there supporting national service before I became President. And when I got in office I was able to take the advocacy that Sam Nunn had had for so long, and now we've given 60,000 Americans a chance to serve in their local community, to solve problems at the grassroots level, and pay their way through college. Thank you, Sam Nunn.

Senator Nunn told you that very moving story about seeing the Russian nuclear sub destroyed. But he was characteristically too modest. I wrote him a letter the other day and I said, "Senator, when the history of this era is written and people talk about how the cold war came to an end and how we moved into a bright new day of security, the name of Sam Nunn will loom large." Because it was Sam Nunn's leadership, along with Senator Dick Lugar, that got the funds through Congress that helped us to contribute to the effort to make sure that the nuclear missiles were removed from the non-Russian Republics of the former Soviet Union and helped us to reduce nuclear arsenals by two-thirds and helped make sure that today, as we stand here in Macon, Georgia, there are no Russian missiles targeted at the United States of America. Thank you, Sam Nunn.

I want to thank those of you who have anything to do with Robins Air Force Base. It did win the President's award as the finest Air Force base in the world last year. It will be the home of the 19 new J-STARS, which I saw yesterday, the place where they're made in Louisiana. It will get 1,500 new high-skill, high-wage jobs as a result of the base realignment. Those of you who are making the C-17 need to know that I flew into Bosnia on one. It is unquestionably the finest transport plane in the entire world. You should be proud of your contributions here to the Nation's defense and the future security and peace of the world. Thank you very much.

My fellow Americans, it's only 11 days till we vote on the last President of the 20th century, and more importantly, the first President

of the 21st century. We are on the right track. I said in 1992 when I came here, if you'd give me a chance to serve we would change politics as usual in Washington. We would get out of all this name calling. We would stop pointing our fingers and saying who's to blame, and we would start saying, what are we going to do to make America a better place together? And that's what we've done.

If we could build a new majority in America on three principles, opportunity for all, responsibility from all, and an American community where if you show up for work tomorrow and you believe in our Constitution, our Bill of Rights, our Declaration of Independence, we don't need to know anything else about you. You are a part of our American community, and we're going forward together.

You heard Senator Nunn say it; we are on the right track. Compared to 4 years ago we are better off. And our opponents would be saying it is morning in America if they had this record. We do have 10½ million more jobs. We have the highest rate of homeownership in 15 years. We have incomes going up for the first time in 20 years for middle income working people. We have the lowest rate of poverty ever recorded for American seniors and for African-Americans. We've got the biggest drop in childhood poverty in 20 years. We're moving in the right direction. There are nearly 2 million fewer people on welfare than there were the day I became President of the United States, and I'm proud of that. And one of the reasons is that we've increased collection of child support that absent parents owe their children by 50 percent. And I'm proud of that.

We've cleaned up more toxic waste sites in 3½ years than the people before us did in 12. And they talk about being conservative; listen to this, folks: We reduced the deficit in each year of this administration, all 4 years; that's the first time that's happened in the 20th century.

They talk about being against big Government. Our administration has reduced the size of the Government, the number of Government programs, the number of Government regulations and we have privatized more Government operations in 3½ years than the previous two Republican administrations did in 12. We're moving in the right direction to the 21st century.

But there is a difference. What I'm trying to do is to give you a smaller and less bureau-

cratic Government in Washington but one that is strong enough to help give you the tools to make the most of your own lives, care for each other and your families and communities, deal with emergencies as they arise, and protect America in the new environment of the 21st century. The best days of this country are still ahead. Don't let anybody kid you; our best days are still ahead.

The young people in this audience—and I'm glad to see so many young people here—this election is about you. The children in this audience will be doing—many of the children in this audience today will be doing jobs that have not been invented yet. Some of the children in this audience will be doing jobs that have not been imagined yet.

We were just in Atlanta, we had a great rally there, and one of our speakers was an attractive young mother from Georgia. She and her husband lived in New York, and he got an opportunity to come back to Georgia. She wanted to go home in the worst way. And because of computer technology she didn't have to leave her job. She just left her place of work. She still works for the same company in New York; she worked for when she lived in New York; now she can live in Atlanta. She thinks it's a good deal. She thinks it's a good deal.

There were 3 million people doing that when I became President. Today, there are over 12 million. By the 21st century, when we start that new century, there will be over 30 million people working at home, because of computers and technology, where they can take care of their kids and succeed at their work. This world is changing, folks. This old world is changing.

And you know, I appreciate what Senator Nunn said about our record, but the real issue is what kind of future are we going to build. I never will forget once in 1984 I was running for reelection as Governor. And I was going on and on about my record. And I was out in a little country crossroads giving a talk, and the fellow that sort of represented me was in his overalls leaning up against a tree in the shade.

And I was giving a speech—frankly, I thought it was one of the best talks I ever gave. I thought I was terrific, frankly. And after it was over I shook hands, and I ambled over to my friend, and I said, “Well, how did I do?” He said, “Well, that was a pretty good speech. You told us all about what you did.” But he said,

“Now, Bill, tell the truth.” He said, “That's what we hired you to do, a good job. You drew a paycheck every 2 weeks, didn't you?” He said, “You can't expect us to reelect you because you did what you were supposed to do. What are you going to do next time? That's what really matters.”

You can hardly have a clearer choice. You can read the platform Zell Miller wrote if you want to know what we're going to do next time. I wish I could have printed up enough copies to give it to every American citizen. It's not very long, it's a good read, and it says what we stand for and what we're going to do. And you have this huge choice: Do you believe that we're better off being told we're on our own, there is no “We the people,” or do you believe it does take a village to raise our children and build a future for America? Do you believe that we can really reach back and build a bridge to the past, or shouldn't we build a bridge to the 21st century we can all walk across together?

Do you want to balance the budget in a way that protects our obligations to the elderly, to families with members with disabilities, to our poorest children, to protect the environment, to invest in education, to grow the economy and keep interest rates down? Or do you want some risky tax scheme that sounds great at election time but it will blow a hole in the deficit, require bigger cuts in Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment that I vetoed last year—and their plan, to boot, actually raises taxes on 9 million hard-working Americans. I think I know the answer to that. We want to build a bridge to the 21st century. Let's balance the budget, grow the economy, and invest in our future.

I think one of the most important things that we can do to fulfill our values of work and faith and family is to help folks who are working and who have children to succeed as parents and as workers. All over America, I can go to any crowd, virtually any income group, and people tell me over and over again their stories of times when they've been worried about how they could fill their obligations to their children or their parents and do what they're supposed to do at work. The family and medical leave law, which our opponents oppose, has given 12 million Americans a chance to take a little time off from work when a baby was born or a parent was sick or a spouse was sick without losing their jobs. We're a stronger country because of

it. And I want—I want to expand that law in a modest way to say that folks ought to be able to take a little time off to take their kids to regular doctor's appointments or go to the school twice a year and see the teacher and see how their kids are doing. I think it will make us a stronger country.

But you have to decide. You will decide what we're going to do about health care. We worked hard, hard, hard to try to protect the American people's ability to buy and keep health care. In the last few weeks of this Congress finally we passed two bills that I've been working hard for. One says you can't lose your health insurance anymore just because you change jobs or somebody in your family gets sick. The other bill says an insurance company can no longer force a hospital to kick a new mother and a newborn baby out of the hospital after only one day.

Another part of what we did, at long last, says to Vietnam veterans who served their country in Vietnam and were exposed to Agent Orange, whose children were born with a terrible disease, spina bifida, "Finally, after 20 years, we're going to give you the medical support and the disability payments you deserve to help you with your families." Our veterans should not be punished through not being able to take care of their kids who were injured through their own service.

So we're moving in the right direction. But my balanced budget plan will help families when they're between jobs keep their health insurance for another 6 months. We'll add another million children to the ranks of people who have health insurance. We'll provide for mammograms for women on Medicare to help save their lives. And for families that are taking care of family members with Alzheimer's, over a million and a half of them in America today, we'll give them a little respite care so they can keep their parents at home and still keep their families together and their sanity. It's a good program. We need to keep on going.

But you have to decide. You will decide whether we keep our work up to clean up the environment, or whether we buy a theory that says you can't grow the economy and preserve the environment. Let me tell you, folks, we can't grow the economy unless we preserve the environment. It is the key to our future. All over the world today American companies are creating jobs for Americans here at home helping

other countries to avoid their environmental problems with new technologies. If you will give us 4 more years, we're going to clean up 500 more toxic waste dumps so our kids will be growing up next to parks, not poison. We need your help to build that bridge to the 21st century.

The most important thing we can do is to give you a safe, strong learning environment. I have worked hard to make our streets safer. But we're only halfway home. That 100,000 police program, it's a 5-year program. We've funded about half the police, and the departments are training them and putting them on the streets. The question is, should we finish? You heard Senator Nunn say we've got the lowest crime rate in 10 years. The crime rate in America has gone down for 4 years in a row. That's the good news. But there are problems out there. Juvenile gangs are growing at a rapid rate, terrifying our children, committing random acts of violence, often selling drugs.

So you have this situation in America that I never thought I'd see. The crime rate goes down for 4 years in a row in America, but the crime rate among juveniles went up for 3 of those 4 years and only started going down last year. The drug use rate goes down dramatically in America—30 percent drop in cocaine use, 13 percent drop in overall use—but drug use among people under 18 going up, and these gangs taking over neighborhoods and neighborhoods and neighborhoods.

I say, yes, we've made progress with the "three strikes and you're out," with the 100,000 police, with the Brady bill, which left every hunter in Georgia and Arkansas with his weapon but kept 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting handguns. It's the right thing to do. We're making progress. But we've got more to do.

And let's just talk about that. We've got to first finish the job of putting 100,000 police on the street. Our opponents led the fight against it; then they tried twice to kill it. I say we ought to finish it. It's your decision. You want some help in Macon to deal with your gang problem? You've got to vote for our administration because we've got a plan to give it to you.

The other thing we ought to do is use the full power of the Federal prosecutors to go after these violent gangs with the same laws that we used to break the mob, the Mafia, years ago.

They should not take our children's future away from us, and we can't let them do it.

The third thing we ought to do is to remember that the best thing we can do is to save our kids in the first place and keep them out of trouble. I've worked hard to promote the safe and drug-free schools program, so that there would be a D.A.R.E. officer or somebody else that young kids can look up to in every grade school in America, telling these kids drugs are wrong, drugs are dangerous, drugs can kill you. Our opponents, they tried to cut it in half and take those services away from millions of kids. You have to decide. I think you want more people telling your kids to stay off drugs and keeping them out of trouble, not fewer. It's your decision. I think I know what you want.

This won't all be easy, folks. I asked this last week—I might get booed a little by the young people here, but I'm going to say this again: Even though youth drug use has gone up dramatically in the last 4 years, 90 percent of our kids are still drug-free. They're good children. They're not doing the wrong thing. They deserve to be protected.

But I'm going to ask those young people to make a sacrifice for their country and the kids who aren't drug-free. I'm going to ask every State in this country to make a drug test a part of driver's licensing so that we can identify the kids that are in trouble and save them before it's too late, get them out of trouble and save them. And I think the young people will accept the challenge to help their fellow boys and girls to have a better life.

But you have to decide. This is your decision. And we are going to build the best education system in the world for everybody. Today in Atlanta, I said something I want to say again. Forty percent—we all know education is the key to the future, but 40 percent of our 8-year-olds still cannot read a book on their own. If you can't read, what good is it to have a computer? How can you learn anything?

I have a proposal to take AmeriCorps volunteers and other trained reading tutors—30,000 of them—to go across this country and mobilize a million volunteers. The Congress finally appropriated our recommendation on work-study funds. We're going to have a couple of hundred thousand more college students drawing work-study. And I'm going to try to dedicate 100,000 of those college students to teaching young children to read.

I want to be able to say—think about it—by the year 2000, we want every 8-year-old in America—every single 8-year-old—to be able to hold up a book and say, "I can read this all by myself." Will you help us do that? [*Applause*]

The second thing we want to do is to hook up every classroom and every library and every school in every community in America to the information superhighway by the year 2000—computers, educational software, trained teachers hooked up to the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Now, for all of you who are older like me and you're not just computer geniuses, let me tell you what that means in practical terms for your kids. It means that, for the first time in the history of this country ever, that children in the poorest inner-city and rural school districts, that children in the middle class school districts, that children in the wealthiest districts—public or private—for the first time ever will have immediate access to the same learning at the same level of quality in the same way as every other child in America. It has never happened before. Will you help us do that? [*Applause*]

And lastly, we're going to follow Georgia's lead and Governor Miller's lead and open the doors of college to every American who needs to go—every American. We propose to give every student who will work hard and maintain decent grades access to 2 years of education after high school by simply letting you deduct, dollar for dollar, the cost of the typical community college tuition from your tax bill. That's our HOPE scholarship. Do right and you can have 2 years of college.

We propose to let every family save in an IRA and save and save and save, but to withdraw from that without any tax penalty if you're using that money to pay for college education or for medical costs or to buy a first-time home. And we propose to give families in this country a \$10,000 tax deduction for the tuition in any kind of education after high school, anytime in America—for graduate school or undergraduate, of whatever age.

Now, that's what's at stake. That's what we're going to do for the next 4 years. And it's your decision. So I ask you to go out 11 days from now and vote your convictions about your future. And I ask you to talk to those who are not here and tell them that, if you stay home, you're voting too. You're making a decision. The

idea that you don't make a decision as a citizen if you don't vote is not true; you do.

So just think about this beautiful day and look around this crowd. And let me leave you with this last thought. How long have we seen America divided by politicians at election time for their own benefit? How long have we seen people pitted against one another?

I will say again, the most important thing we have to remember is that we are all better off when we all have a chance—not a guarantee but a chance—to make the most of our God-given abilities. We are all better off. We are all better off when we help each other have the tools to build strong families and strong futures and strong communities.

So I say to you, I want you in 11 days—for Bill Clinton and Al Gore, for Max Cleland, for Jim Wiggins, for Sanford Bishop, for the

people that are interested in building a bridge to the 21st century wide enough and strong enough to make sure our best days are still ahead—to go out there and help us build that bridge.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:55 p.m. at First and Cherry Streets. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jim Marshall of Macon; Mayor Floyd Adams, Jr., of Savannah, GA; Rosemary Kaszans and Jim Wiggins, candidates for Georgia's First and Eighth Congressional Districts, respectively; Richard Gallo, national vice president, International Brotherhood of Police Officers; and Mary Lou Kenner, HOPE scholarship recipient. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

The President's Radio Address

October 26, 1996

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we must do to stand up for the rights and interests of crime victims as we work to combat crime. I'm announcing a major new effort to help the victims of crime, especially those who are the victims of gang violence.

We put in place an anticrime strategy that is both tough and smart: putting 100,000 police on our streets; toughened penalties; banning 19 deadly assault weapons; passed the Brady bill that's kept 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from getting guns. Congress just answered my call to tell parolees, if you go back on drugs, you'll go back to jail.

We've greatly expanded the safe and drug-free schools program, so that in every classroom we can have good role models telling our young people constantly, drugs are dangerous, illegal, and wrong.

All across America this community-based strategy is working. Crime is coming down in every region, in every category. The FBI reports that crime in America has dropped 4 years in a row now. Last year there were one million fewer crime victims. Crime is at a 10-year low in our country, but it's still intolerably high. We can take some comfort in knowing we're

moving in the right direction. And we have to keep going and finish the job.

But as we prevent crime and punish criminals, we must also always remember the victims of crime themselves. When you're a victim, especially a victim of violent crime, the losses you face go far beyond the money stolen or the property destroyed. We must do everything we can to help the victims of crime to make sure their voices are heard in the corridors of justice.

For nearly 20 years now, I've been involved in the fight for victims' rights. As attorney general of my State, I proposed legislation that compensates the victims of crime. As Governor, I signed legislation guaranteeing the right of victims to be present in the courtroom. As President, I've fought to protect victims. The Violence Against Women Act helps thousands of women who are victims of domestic abuse and sexual assault. We've helped open hundreds of new shelters for those fleeing domestic violence. And our toll-free hotline, 1-800-799-SAFE, has received nearly 60,000 calls.

I support a constitutional amendment to guarantee crime victims the right to attend and speak at court proceedings, sentencing, and parole hearings; the right to be told when a convict